THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

February/March 2016 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Journey to Burundi

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

One does not expect to stumble onto a murder mystery while sipping espresso at the polished dining room table of dear Italian nuns. Yet that is what happened to me one afternoon back in April. Nine months earlier, three Xaverian sisters, Lucia Pulici, Olga Raschietta, and Bernadetta Boggian, were brutally murdered in their convent in Kamenge, an impoverished district in the Burundian capital of Bujumbura. Located south of Rwanda, Burundi is one of the poorest countries in world, a devoutly Catholic place where nuns are loved and revered.

The Xaverian sisters were members of a missionary order that has a community here in Worcester. I had come to interview two of their nuns, envisioning a straightforward Q&A that might yield some insights on faith's response to violence.

But abstract reflections were not part of that afternoon's conversation. Instead, I listened as Sisters Laura and Rosetta, vividly recounted details from the day of the women's murders, their shock still evident. The Worcester nuns did not know who committed the horrendous crime or why. "We want to know *what happened*," said Rosetta in a lilting Italian accent, her hands fluttering as she spoke.

I was intrigued. After months of researching the Kamenge murders from afar, praying, and wallowing in indecision, I decided to travel to Burundi to investigate the story. While there, I found myself briefly trapped in a city under lock down from battle. The experience plunged me into a fear I had never known before and showed me too an astonishing, persistent faith.

Bujumbura in December was a city on edge, still simmering over President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial election to a third term last July. Most of the opposition had fled the country or gone underground. The city's independent radio stations, a primary news source for Burundians, had been shut down, and every night security forces made raids into neighborhoods where resistance to the government persisted. In the morning, corpses of young men showed up on the streets. Some international observers feared Burundi, barely ten years out from a civil war, would devolve into ethnic conflict, or genocide.

Xavierian Sister Olga Raschietta in Burundi

None of this tension was immediately apparent at the guest house where I stayed. It sat within Mount Sion, a mission of the Schoenstatt Fathers, an international order of German origin with a devotion to the Virgin Mary. Perched atop one of Bujumbura's affluent neighborhoods, the mission was an oasis of peace, a hub of Catholic piety.

My bedroom window looked out on a spacious compound of green lawn with walkways leading to a Marian shrine, a

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The Gun Culture

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

According to the Dec. 10, 2015 issue of *The Santa Barbara Independent*, "Since 1968, more Americans have been killed by gunfire—1.5 million— than in all the wars in the nation's history, 1.1 million." Richard Martinez, whose 20-year-old son, Christopher, was one of six UCSB students shot to death two years ago, told the *Independent*, "The average American is 20 times more likely to be shot to death than would be the case in any other developed country." He called politicians who do nothing to curb easy access to guns "gutless bastards."

Mr. Martinez is not the only American who has lost all patience with the stranglehold that the National Rifle Association (NRA) has on Congress. Mass shooting after mass shooting, each more horrific than the last, elicit nothing more than empty platitudes followed by an increase in gun sales.

While the top-down approach to gun control is thwarted by the NRA, there is nothing to stop a bottom-up effort against the culture of guns. In the same way that smoking gradually moved from socially acceptable, even cool, to something dangerous and extremely stupid, the purchase and possession of guns can be stigmatized.

Just as parents would never allow their child to visit the house of a friend whose parents were active drug users, the same scrutiny can be extended to gun ownership. A home with a pistol in the drawer of a bedside table or a rifle in a closet is not a safe place for children to play.

While the media continues to

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Gun Culture

(Continued from Page 1)

romanticize guns as instruments to defend the innocent, parents can burst that balloon by making it clear to their children and friends that guns are many times more likely to harm an innocent person than an intruder. A crystalline distinction needs to be made between fantasy and reality.

Those who profit from the sale of guns need to be met with regular protests. When communities make it clear that a gun store is not welcome, the culture of gun acceptability is diminished.

Similarly, churches, hospitals, and institutions of learning should be encouraged to declare themselves "gun-free zones." The trend toward introducing armed guards in public schools needs to be met with protest. The myth that more guns means more safety has to be beaten back relentlessly. NRA propaganda must not be allowed to stand unchallenged.

Here in Worcester, a gun range on Grafton Street was the site of numerous complaints for violations of gun sale laws, especially to gang members. The permit for this range was revoked in 2007 after someone commited suicide on the range.

When another businessman sought permission in May to open a new gun range at 170 Prescott Street, Worcester's Chief of Police understandably objected, as did the administration of nearby Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Claudia Russo, owner of Workplace Resource at 162 Prescott Street, called the range "an affront to the neighborhood," selling guns that are "pretty scary." The Worcester City Council voted 10-1 against the gun range.

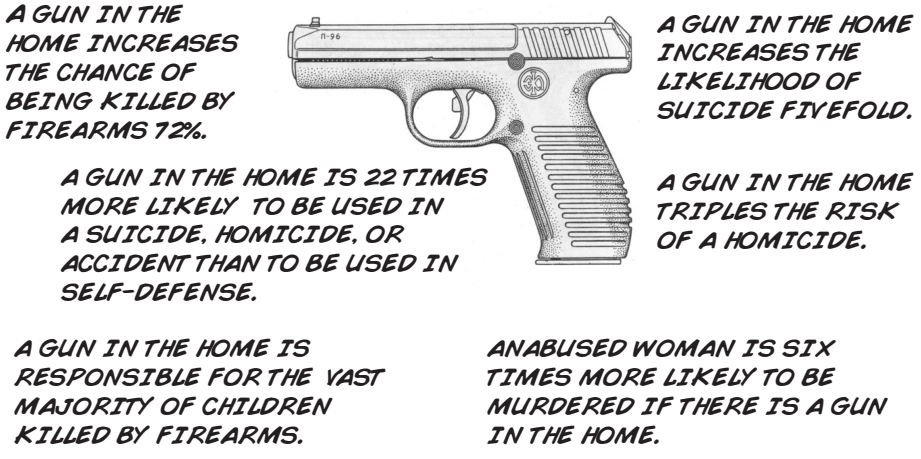
Nonetheless, in June, Worcester's liscensing committee granted a permit for The Gun Parlor to fire, rent, and sell guns. On its website, The Gun Parlor advertises hundreds of weapons including the Bushmaster AR 15 and the Thompson Commando. 45ACP, both with 30-round magazines. They also advertise the Semi Auto 308 Caliber mounted on a tripod which fires between 400 and 600 rounds per minute. Since some of these weapons are illegal in Massachusetts, The Gun Parlor says they "are only available to out of state customers/Law Enforcement Officials." (With New Hampshire only 41 miles away, this is not much of a barrier.) They boast, "If you don't see what you are looking for, let us know, and we will get it." Customers can fire fully automatic machine guns, which are illegal to buy in all 50 US states, and the same type of semi-automatic weapons that murdered children in Newtown, Connecticut. They fire those weapons into human silhouettes. This is not about hunting wildlife. It is about maximum fire power to kill large numbers of human beings. The Gun Parlor encourges rentals "to try before you buy."

Liz Kurtz, a friend from Austin, tells us, "Proud Texans can now brandish their armed weapons openly when taking their dogs for a walk, shopping at the grocery store, going to the library, and more. God forbid, we encounter it. What do I do? How do I talk to my kids about this?"

In December, a dozen people protested at The Gun Parlor. On Christmas day, the NBA began featuring basketball stars in hard-hitting anti-gun violence television ads. After prasing the league's courage, NPR's John LaForge asked, "Realistically, can athletes change the way people think on issues? Probably not... but surveys show that Americans are in favor of stronger gun regulations, and it is true that it is often a little something that starts a big action."

Consider joining our monthly vigil at the Gun Parlor starting on February 13 at 12:30. If you cannot attend, send us your name as a sponsor. Ask your church, synagogue, mosque, club, or civic group to endorse the vigil as well. We will list individuals, congregations, and organizations on our leaflet.

The gun lobby is powerful, but not invincible. It can be defeated by a grass roots campaign. Let's all do our bit. Ω


PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM A KILLER
A GUN IN THE HOME INCREASES THE CHANCE OF BEING KILLED BY FIREARMS 72%.
A GUN IN THE HOME INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUICIDE FIVEFOLD.
A GUN IN THE HOME IS 22 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE USED IN A SUICIDE, HOMICIDE, OR ACCIDENT THAN TO BE USED IN SELF-DEFENSE.
A GUN IN THE HOME TRIPLES THE RISK OF A HOMICIDE.
A GUN IN THE HOME IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF CHILDREN KILLED BY FIREARMS.
AN ABUSED WOMAN IS SIX TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE MURDERED IF THERE IS A GUN IN THE HOME.

TheWest Has Chosen the Worst Path: War

by Leonardo Boff

Editor's Note: The author is a Brazilian theologian, writer, and supporter of rights for the poor and excluded. He currently serves as Professor Emeritus of Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, and Ecology at the Rio de Janeiro State University.

The terrorist actions perpetrated in Paris on November 13, by terrorist groups of Islamic extraction, were certainly abominable and totally worthy of condemnation. Such nefarious acts do not fall from the sky. They have a prehistory of rage, humiliation, and desire of revenge.

Academic studies conducted in the United States have shown that the continuous military interventions of the West, its geopolitics towards the Middle East to guarantee the supply of oil, the blood of the world system, further aggravated by the unconditional support of the United States for the State of Israel, with its notoriously brutal violence against the Palestinian people, are the principal motivation for Islamic terrorism against the West and against the United States (www.WarisaCrime.org).

Starting with George W. Bush, vigorously retaken now by François Hollande and his European allies, plus Russia and the United States, the West's reply has been the path of implacable war against terrorism, be it internal, within Europe, or external, against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. But this is the worst path, as Edgar Morin noted, because war is not combated either with another war, or with fundamentalism (the cultural fundamentalism of the West that presumes to be the best in the world, with the right to impose it on everyone). War as a reply, which most likely will be interminable, given the difficulty of defeating fundamentalism, or those who decide to turn their own bodies into highly destructive bombs, is still based in the old pre-globalization paradigm, a paradigm harbored by nation-states, without realizing that history has changed and that the human species and life on planet Earth now share a collective destiny. The path of war has never brought peace, at best some pacification, leaving a macabre burden of rage and a will for revenge on the part of

"Cease firing!" by Oscar E. Cesare, 1916

the defeated, who, to tell the truth, never will be totally defeated.

The old paradigm answered war with war. The new paradigm, of the global phase of the Earth and of humanity, responds with a paradigm of comprehension, hospitality of all for all, of dialogue without boundaries, of inter-exchanges without borders, of the win-win and of alliances among all. Otherwise, with war becoming ever more destructive, we could put an end to our species, or make our Common Home uninhabitable.

Who can guarantee that the current terrorists will not adopt sophisticated technologies and start using chemical and biological weapons that, for example, are released in the water system of a great city, and end up causing unprecedented loss of human life? We know that they are preparing to mount cyber attacks, and attacks on computer systems that could affect the entire energy system of a big city: including hospitals, schools, airports, and public services. The war option could be carried to these extremes, all of which are possible.

We must take seriously the warning of Eric Hobswbam in his book, **The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century**: "The world runs the risk of explosion and implosion; the world must change.... The alternative to change is darkness." Or the warning of the eminent historian Arnold Toynbee, who, after writing ten volumes about the great historical civilizations, in his autobiographical essay, *Experiences* tells us: "I lived to see the end of human history become an intra-historic possibility, capable of being made real, not as an act of God but as an act of man himself."

The West has opted for war to the end. But the West will never again have peace and will live full of fear, and hostage to the potential attacks that are the Islamists' revenge. Let's hope that the scene described by Jacques Attali in **A Brief History of the Future**, regional wars, ever more destructive to the point of threatening the human species, does not come to pass. And humanity, to survive, will have to consider a global government with a hyper-planetary democracy.

I think it is important to accept as a fact the existence of an Islamic State, and then, to create a pluralistic coalition of nations and diplomatic means and peace, so as to create the conditions for dialogue, to address the common destiny of the Earth and humanity.

I am afraid that the typical arrogance of the West, with its imperialistic vision of itself as being better in everything, will not welcome this peaceful path and prefers war. In that case, the prophetic phrase of Martin Heidegger, discovered after his death, will again become significant: "then only God can save us."

We should not naively wait for divine intervention, because our destiny is our responsibility. We will be what we chose: either a species that preferred self-extermination and holding on to its absurd will to power, above everything else, or better, that we forge the basis for a lasting peace, that allows us to live both different and united, in our one Common Home. Ω

Moral Integrity and Voting

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

I came of voting age in New Hampshire in 1976 and, like all my neighbors, I considered it my civic duty to participate in the first-in-the-nation presidential primary. I researched each candidate, found my favorite, and, time after time, watched in dismay as my choice was rejected by the majority, and I was left to support a less appealing surrogate in the final election against an even worse adversary. Although the process was clearly imperfect, I never considered sitting it out.

Years later, I was drawn to the Catholic Worker by its peace activism, work with the poor, spirituality, and commitment to simple living. Only later on, did I learn that the movement's founder Dorothy Day, who, as a young woman, campaigned for women's right to vote, never voted. As a personalist, she always preferred to tackle problems directly rather than delegate responsibility for them to others. Her position confounded me.

A Catholic Worker, whom Dorothy greatly admired, Ammon Hennacy, gave me more pause by saying, "When you vote for lesser evil, you soon forget that you voted for evil." His logic struck me forcefully in 1984 when a peace activist friend urged me to vote for Walter Mondale because "fewer people will be killed if he is elected." There was no question that both candidates would kill people. It was just a matter of degree. As a pacifist, I could not justify such a choice.

Nowadays, national candidates pit life issues against each other. An abortion opponent is likely to be a fan of the death penalty, while a supporter of economic justice for the poor is likely to be a supporter of abortion and euthanasia. And all of the candidates favor war to a greater or lesser degree

The American Catholic Bishops wade into this moral quicksand with voting guides that spell out issues important to the Church. Although many topics are covered, opposition to abortion has always been front and center, leading many Catholics to sacrifice the other issues and vote for Republicans, who in the end, despite their anti-abortion campaign rhetoric, never seriously curtail abortions.

Pope Francis shook this paradigm up by making concern for the poor, the environment, and world peace his top priorities. Francis is opposed to abortion as well, but does not want to see the issue dominate or prevent action on other crucial concerns.

Unfortunately, at their November meeting, the American Catholic Bishops approved a voter guide, against the strenuous objection of Pope Francis supporters like San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy, which presents abortion and euthanasia as the paramount concerns, all but endorsing the Republicans.

Instead of valuing life only before birth and on the verge of death, the Bishops could hold the gamut of life issues together in a "seamless garment," as the late Cardinal Joseph Bernadin said we should. This approach might encourage the rise of candidates who embrace the whole spectrum of Catholic justice issues. Until that day, I tend to agree with Ammon Hennacy: "If God wanted us to vote, God would have given us candidates."

But for those who still believe that voting is a duty, I strongly urge them to consider all the issues and to do their very best to choose a candidate who will actually do less harm and more good than those in the past. We must work to see that greed and violence are set aside forever.Ω

What kind of report card might Pope Francis give the candidates?

	refugees	global warming	immigration	war	military spending	living wage	affordable healthcare	gun control	abortion	death penalty	assisted suicide	GRADE
Jeb Bush	B	C	B+	C	?	C	C	F	B+	C+	A	C+
Ben Carson	F	F	D+	D	?	C+	D	F	B	D+	A	D+
Hillary Clinton	B+	A	B+	C	D+	B+	B+	A	F	C	F	C+
Chris Christie	F	D+	D+	D	D	F	D+	C	B	F	B+	D+
Ted Cruz	F	F	D	D	D	D	F	F	C+	F	A	D
Carly Fiorina	D	D	C	C	F	F	D	D	B+	D+	A	D+
Mike Huckabee	F	D	D+	D	?	D+	C	F	A	F	B+	D+
John Kasich	F	D+	B	D+	C	C	C	F	B+	F	A	C
Martin O'Malley	A	A	A	B	C+	B+	B+	B+	F	A	?	B
George Pataki	F	C+	B	D+	D+	D	C+	B+	D+	D	B	C
Rand Paul	F	D	B	C	D	D	D	F	C+	D	B	D+
Marco Rubio	D	D	B	C	D	F	D	F	D	D	?	D
Bernie Sanders	A	A	B+	B+	A	B+	A	B	F	A	F	B
Rick Santorum	F	D	D	F	F	C	F	F	A	F	A	D
Jill Stein	A	A	A	B+	A	A	A	A	F	A	?	B+
Donald Trump	F	D	F	C	D+	F	C	F	D	F	?	D

Burundi

(Continued from Page 1)

large round church, and a white bell tower that defiantly clanged at six every morning. Gloriously harmonious singing emanated from the compound throughout the day – hymns at the morning Mass, afternoon choir rehearsals, nightly chants from the seminarians.

It was only at night that I heard evidence of the city's divisions. The pop-pop of guns. The dull thud of a grenade lobbed in a distant neighborhood. From afar, the explosions sounded like fireworks celebrating a wedding or extravagant birthday, not indicators of someone's death.

For two tranquil days, I conducted interviews with the help of my friend Jodi Mikalachki, an American academic. Jodi had lived in Burundi for six years and loved the country wholeheartedly. Now working in Nairobi, Kenya, she was in Burundi for a Christmas visit.

Our first morning included a dramatic interview in which the speaker, who must remain anonymous, described the murders in Kamenge as "a crime of the state," planned at the highest level of the government. Then came an inspiring hour with Consalata Baranyizigiye, Coordinator of the Catholic Church's National Justice and Peace Commission. Cautious in her responses to questions about the Xaverian nuns, Consalata freely discussed the Catholic Church's outspoken opposition to the president's pursuit of a third term and its current appeals for dialogue and lasting peace. Many of the victims of the daily extra-judicial killings were youths who had participated in opposition marches last summer, she said. She never imagined the police would kill them. "We are praying for dialogue and that the Church can be a part of that," she said.

As the Church's spokeswoman for peace and justice, Consalata has had her life threatened at least once (Bujumbura's archbishop reportedly four times), yet there she was in her modest office fatigued, but present and still advocating for peace.

Early in the morning of December 11th, militants attacked two military bases and a training camp in and around the city. The gunfire that had become part of the nightly soundscape now penetrated the day. Bujumbura was suspended in a state of anxious waiting. Was the assault a momentary escalation or the start of the war some predicted would come? School was cancelled. No one went to work, the streets too volatile for the commute. Father Evariste, the only other visitor at the guest house, did not take his exam in social marketing. I did not do interviews.

Fear, I discovered, is not a single portal you cross into a place of constant courage. It comes and goes, according to circumstance. All that long day, I fluctuated between fear and fury, as well as astonishment at the stoic

faith of the Burundians around me.

Confined to Mount Sion, I wrote reassuring emails to my family, researched prospects for a quick exodus from Bujumbura, and marveled at the young people who braved the streets to attend choir rehearsal at the mission. "Joy to the World," they sang, while guns crackled in the background.

The afternoon brought a lull in the shooting. Then, several loud detonations boomed above the prayers of the priest during the evening Mass. "Let me stay at your place," I begged Jodi. If the fighting escalated during the night, I did not want to be evaluating the situation in broken French with the dear priests at the mission. But she had risked staying out past the curfew and needed to return home immediately. Too flustered to quickly grab my things, I remained at the guest house and later packed a "flight bag" in case Father Evariste and I needed to flee to the forest. What would I say if the men with guns should stop us? "Please don't shoot, I am just an American grandmother."

After every burst of morning gunfire, I had prayed the bullets would miss their mark. By evening, I no longer cared who was shooting or getting killed, I just wanted the battle to end. I wanted the certainty of knowing tomorrow I could do what I had planned. How maddening that an entire city was held hostage to the agenda of a few armed men and youth.

More than eighty people (some reports say hundreds) were killed in the city on December 11th, many shot by security forces during retaliatory "mop-up" operations in the neighborhoods. In the chaotic seconds before death, perhaps some of those killed had wished for time to plead their innocence: "Please don't shoot, I am just a milk seller."

Looking back, I realize my one-day immersion in fear and uncertainty, the pathetic, miserable feeling of being at the caprice of the men with guns, are what people in places of armed conflict and political instability endure for years. May I not forget them.

The battle in Bujumbura ended with a thunderstorm. On Saturday, the city awoke to rain-washed skies and blessed silence. No gunfire. I scurried to various interviews and took photos at the Mass of Ordination happening at Mount Sion. The three-hour liturgy was an explosion of color and worship. To the left of the altar sat the threatened archbishop, smiling tensely as girls in gowns the color of sunflower and roses and boys wearing headdresses of white grass swayed while the choirs sang.

I have come home with a pile of notes about the Xaverian nuns and sustaining memories of Bujumbura, a brave city of persistent faith. Ω

Let us abandon all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. . .. Instead let us live the joy of encounter with the grace that transforms all.

—Pope Francis

Good News

While many environmental stories we hear today are depressing and even alarming, like the news that up to 100 elephants a day are killed in Africa by poachers, the December 2015 issue of *Massachusetts Wildlife* includes a story of the resurection of an environmental treasure: the American Chestnut tree.

According to the Mass Fisheries and Wildlife Agency, which publishes *Massachusetts Wildlife*, the American Chestnut represented 25% of the hardwood forest from Maine to the Mississippi. It towered over other trees. Its fruit provided 60% of the food for bears, deer, turkeys, squirrels, and other wildlife. Roasted chestnuts were America's first fast food. That all changed when, over 70 years, a blight killed four billion chestnut trees, virtually wiping out the majestic species.

But, an effort began in 1980 to "pollinate the female flowers of blight-resistant Chinese Chestnuts with pollen from blight-susceptible American Chestnuts." This is a slow process which will culminate this year with the planting of 3,000 chestnut trees in a Massachusetts seed orchard. The 20 strongest trees will be preserved to produce "thousands, if not millions, of chestnuts to be used for reforestation efforts across Massachusetts to benefit wildlife and forest diversity." Ω

American Chestnut
Castanea dentata
Under a spreading chestnut tree The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he, With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms Are strong as iron bands.

poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Letters

Dear Claire,

I appreciated reading Scott's piece "Peace in the Holy Land" in *The Catholic Radical* this month. He captured well the oppression that Palestinians both in Israel and the Occupied Territories suffer at the hands of the IDF [Israeli military] and the Israeli government without any recourse to justice. Also, it was helpful to remind readers that increasingly both Palestinians and Israelis are fighting for a democracy with human rights for all — something we don't much hear about in our biased news media.

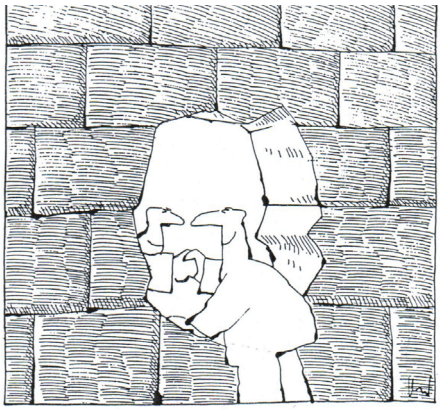
The only quibble I have concerns the actual population figures of Palestinians and Jews in Israel/Palestine. He mentions that "given the vast numerical majority of Palestinians, Jewish domination is a doomed enterprise." If we take into account all the Palestinians in the diaspora, then that is the case. But I don't think that is what Scott had in mind. The current numbers in Israel/Palestine are pretty much even at the moment, with the Palestinian population growing at a faster rate. There are about 5.8 million Arabs in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel, and 5.9 million Jews in settlements and Israel. This does not change his main point, however, that it [Zionism] is a doomed enterprise. By 2020 Palestinians will outnumber Jews.

Octavia Taylor
New Braintree, Massachusetts

Hi Scott,

I agree with many of your arguments — especially the fact that Israel has made a mess for itself with all of the settlements on the West Bank.

But I feel that any discussion about anti-Zionism and BDS(Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) needs to include the broader context of anti-Semitism. I recommend a book that has shaped my perspective as an agnostic Jew with family in Israel, **The Devil That Never Dies**, by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. Similar to racism in the US, anti-Semitism still heavily influences people's attitudes and behaviors across the globe. Even my friendly Lebanese Christian mechanic lumps all Jews as



Len Munnik

businessmen who profit off the Christmas season...

As far as your question about settlements and ethnic cleansing/apartheid—many Jews and Israelis have the same concern, but with whom should Israel make peace? Do you think Israel should become one state and open its borders and grant full citizenship to millions of Palestinians —would their intense anti-Semitism magically disappear?

I know Israel favors Jews, but it is after all a Jewish state/homeland. Israel welcomes citizens of all faiths - how welcome would I feel, if I was a yarmulke- wearing Jew, in many countries including western Europe? My friend, an agnostic Jew, lived in UAE (one of the more progressive places in the Middle East) for 10 years and would describe the weekly sermons filled with chants of death to the Jews.

Thanks for reading!

Dave Isenberg
Worcester, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: Two millennia of anti-Semitism, perpetrated predominantly by Christians, reached its most heinous manifestation in the Holocaust. In that context it is not surprising that most Jewish people concluded that a Jewish state was needed to ensure freedom, dignity, and security for Jewish people. Unfortunately, to create the Jewish state of Israel, Palestinians were displaced. Their well-documented suffering has played a major role in the antipathy towards Jews commonly expressed today in Islamic

countries.

It is our belief that security for Jews cannot be secured until it is linked to security for all others who share a religious, cultural, and historic tie to the Holy Land. The current policy of the Israeli government, like the anti-Islamic rhetoric of many American politicians, only fuels hatred and violence. Stepping back from long-standing policies of religious, racial, or ethnic prejudice is very difficult, but remains the only path to peace. White Americans are learning this hard lesson from the Black Lives Matter movement.

Dear Scott and Claire,

Thank you for another awakening newsletter. "Peace in the Holy Land"— isn't that what's part of the holiness of that land? Part and parcel."Medicalization of Dissent"— another treatment for symptoms that avoids the causes. And "Deja Vu All Over Again"—automatons (presidents) following the footsteps of automatons, paving hell.

Keep up. Please don't lose your spirit (as in inspiration, will, and hope)....

Phil Milgrom & Nancy Nowak
Warren, Massachusetts

Dear Worcester CWs,

Appreciated receiving your latest publication of *The Catholic Radical,* especially the article "The Medicalization of Dissent." I sent it to a Sister, who thought it was **very** interesting, and intends to send it on to someone else who was a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. All three of us were involved in Central American solidarity here in Dallas throughout the 80's and 90's.

Regarding Afghanistan, (and the anti-war movement), I once created a banner, probably around 1990, which read, "Two mights don't make it right. US out of El Salvador. USSR out of Afghanistan." When I unfurled it at the rally, the strong Marxist element said they would not participate if the banner was raised. The Christian pacifist element said they would. I backed down, feeling uncomfortable with being divisive... our number of protesters never being a huge crowd as was often experienced in other parts of the States.

Recently, it came to my attention that Archbishop Oscar Romero likewise struggled with understanding the ideals of militant groups in El Salvador. In his homily dated January 13, 1980, he preached, "¿Porque tanto clamor contra el imperialismo y cuando los periodicos y en todas partes se anuncia la invasión de Rusia a Afganistan, no se had dicho nada?" "Why protest against imperialism and when the newspapers announce the invasion of Afghanistan by Russia, nobody says anything?" Of course today we could take the SR off the USSR and hold the banner but it does make us look more closely at our motives for protesting or joining in any cause or movement... even the C.W. Movement and whether or not we are willing to pay the price as did Archbishop Romero, who is now beatified.

Please pray for a priest, a Third World priest, named Father James McKenna, who died in May and left me, and Jonah House, his collection of religious books, including all the homilies of Archbishop Romero. Father McKenna was a Dallas diocesan priest to Peru for 20 years, then spent 5 years in Nicaragua during the Contra War, and eventually died in Ciudad Juarez [Mexico], where he lived his last 15 years.

Michael Marek
Jonah House Catholic Worker
Dallas, Texas

Catholic Worker Calendar

Carl Theodor Thieman

Release of Nothing Is Impossible: Please come to the celebration of the release of Scott Schaeffer-Duffy's first book. Exact date, time, and location to be announced.

February 10 & 24 March 9 & 23 — Mass or Evening Prayer: Come join us in prayer and song at 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

February 13 & March 12 — Reversing the Gun Culture Vigil: Please join us opposite the entrance to The Gun Parlor shooting range. If you cannot attend, please send us your name or the name of any organization which will endorse this effort . 12:30 - 1:30 P.M. 170 Prescott Street, Worcester.

February 17 — Another Night with Dan Burke: Don't miss the return performance of one of Worcester's most talented musicians. Be prepared to sing as well. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

March 2 — Journey to Burundi: Please come to a slide and video presentation by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy describing her December 2016 trip to central Africa. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

March 25 — Stations of the Cross: Please join us for our annual procession through the streets of Worcester reflecting on Christ's passion and contemporary issue of peace and justice. Gather at 52 Mason Street. We leave at noon and return by 2 P.M. Soup and bread will be available afterwards.

Mason Street Musings

The phone was ringing. It was one A.M. I had just gotten into my sleeping bag on the futon in the front room. An hour earlier, I had been awakened by the flashing lights of a fire truck on Mason Street and by an ambulance on Mason Court, a poorly maintained dead-end drive with three abandoned houses. I answered the phone, "Catholic Worker." The voice of a young woman, sounding high school age, asked if a room was available. She had nowhere to go. The afternoon before, while I was preparing dinner, a former guest telephoned to ask if he could return to the CW. He was in his car, which had little fuel, and he could not stay at a "wet shelter."When Scott and Claire asked if I would house-sit the Catholic Worker during their brief absences at Thanksgiving and after Christmas, my first question was "Who takes care of Thérèse the cat?"

It wasn't a brilliant shining star that drew me to the Catholic Worker house on Mason Street one summer's day in 2001, but a first time visit to The Living Earth, a natural food store, a block over. There, I took a copy of *The Catholic Radical*. I read the Mason Street Musings and the appeal to help paint the house. Soon after, I was on a ladder, paint brush in hand. Scott asked me to come inside for dinner. I demurred. He insisted. There I was, one of a crowd gathered about the table: the guests, Scott and Claire, their sons Patrick and Aiden. The meal was a pasta dish. Claire kept the conversation moving and left no one out. To Aiden: "Eat some vegetables." To me and the guests: "How was your day?" and "What did you do?"

Over the years, I have participated in vigils locally and in Washington, DC. At the height of the Save Darfur campaign, a group of us traveled to the Sudanese embassy in DC where we were intentionally arrested by uniformed Secret Service. I've participated in Stations of the Cross. With my truck, I've hauled 52 Mason Street construction debris, leaves, and brush, and occasionally transported guests. Following a Global

Barthélémy Juguo

Exchange Reality Tour of Costa Rica, I gave a presentation at the CW on fair trade. Following a Christian Peacemaker Team trip to the Israeli-occupied West Bank, I wrote a piece for *The Catholic Radical*.

Most weeks, I cook an evening meal at the Catholic Worker. It is modest relief for Scott and Claire. For me, it is respite and a reminder that with one misstep I could find myself here dependent upon the charity, grace, and hospitality that is offered. But for the telephone calls from potential guests and social workers seeking beds for clients, there are few interruptions. I have two hours to mix batter, chop vegetables, measure, sauté, peel, and sample. I listen to Brian O'Donovan's *Celtic Sojourn* on NPR and light some incense. On Saturdays, Scott sells bread at local parishes. Claire is at the house and typically fretting about a writing deadline or a home improvement project, or she'll be girding herself for a run. "I really, really, really don't want to do this." I can't resist and say casually, "I ran before I came here." Claire is always gracious and appreciative of my coming to cook. She thanks me often. She offers to brew a cup of coffee. I tell her, "Claire, this is respite for me." She is busy and darts about the house. At times, talking with Claire can be likened to standing on a busy sidewalk and, with an index finger extended, vying for her attention. I pivot left and right and back again as she enters and exits the kitchen where I'm working. "Claire, how many am I cooking for?"

One evening after the meal, I expressed frustration that food was left on some of the plates. I purchase expensive, mostly organic, food and have a low boiling point when it is wasted. Claire looked at me and said, "David, what's most important is that the guests come to dinner. The evening meal is an opportunity to socialize, eat, and do a welfare and sobriety check."

As a consequence of my time at the Catholic Worker, I've become familiar with its needs and demands. There are usual household expenses that nibble: the utility bills, food, fuel, and more. There are expenses that chomp: projects like repairing the porch roof or replacing the 30-year-old kitchen floor. Be mindful, during these winter months, that maintaining a welcoming place of hospitality is dependent on your generous support. Ω **David**

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